DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 427 561 FL 801 295

TITLE	Technology and the ESL Classroom: Equipping Students To Function in the Modern World.
INSTITUTION	Arlington County Public Schools, VA. REEP, Arlington Education and Employment Program.; Spring Inst. for International Studies, Wheat Ridge, CO.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Refugee Resettlement (DHHS), Washington, DC.
ISBN	ISBN-0-940723-15-8
PUB DATE	1999-00-00
NOTE	27p.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - General (020) -- Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; *Computer Literacy; Computer Oriented Programs; *Computer Software; *Computer Uses in Education; *English (Second Language); *Information Sources; Second Language Instruction; Welfare Services; Word Processing; *World Wide Web; Writing (Composition)
IDENTIFIERS	Arlington Education and Employment Program VA; Web Sites

ABSTRACT

The guide discusses the role of computers in the English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) classroom, drawing heavily on the experiences of the Arlington (Virginia) Education and Employment Program (REEP). After an introductory section, chapters address these topics in brief articles written by practitioners: initial considerations in program design (the benefits and challenges of technology, learner attitudes about computer use); computers and language learning (what computers offer immigrants and refugees, adults and computer literacy, types of software, organizing and using software, technology as a writing tool, integrating technology into curriculum and practice); student orientation to computers (beginning level students, computer literacy instruction, World Wide Web site orientation); the Internet and its use (integration into adult ESL learning, useful Web sites for this population, Web sites on welfare reform and services); and sources of further information. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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ED 427 561

Technology and the ESL Classroom

Equipping Students to Function in the Modern World

Principal Contributers

Arlington Education and Employment Program
Spring Institute for International Studies

Spring Institute for International Studies

ELT

Technical Assistance for
English Language Training Projects
1997–1998

Sponsored by the
Office of Refugee Resettlement

FL 801295

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ISBN 0-940723-15-8

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Introduction

With the continuing focus on employment and the reality that computers are here to stay, it seemed timely to take a look at technology. In this ELT Publication we focus on computers and their role in ESL classrooms. We draw heavily on the experience and expertise of the Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP). REEP is an adult ESL program serving over 5,000 students per year in intensive and non-traditional classes in Arlington, Virginia. Inaam Mansoor, REEP Director, and her staff have graciously shared their experiences and what they have learned.

If you have no computers, now is the time to be asking the questions raised in "First Things First" on the following page. If someone has just offered your program some used equipment, note especially Lynda Terrill's article on putting together a computer lab, "Using Computers with Adult ESL Learners," page six. If you have computers and are wondering what additional software to buy, you'll appreciate "Types of Software" by Susan Gaer (page 11), and "Organizing and Using Software," by Susan Huss-Lederman and Sharon McKay (page 12).

If you have a group of new students with limited computer experience, Christine Le Cloux has a great exercise to help get some of the basic vocabulary down (Computers 101, page 17).

If you want to make use of the Internet, we have an example of a an orientation exercise, some site suggestions, and a project. And if you're an old hand at surfing the net and using technology with your students, perhaps you'll share your experiences so we can pass on to other readers what you've done that has worked well.

Surf's up.

First Things First

Burna Dunn (ELT/TA Project Director)
Spring Institute

Conversations with the ELT Partners revealed five key questions that programs should address as they plan what relationship to take to technology. Have these questions in the back of your mind as you read the articles in this technology resource.

1. What does our program believe about teaching and learning? Using technology effectively will depend on how technology fits into the program's philosophy.
2. Will technology enhance program efficiency?
3. Who will use the technology? If the technology is being acquired with public funds, will it be necessary to determine if the equipment will be limited to only eligible staff and students of that funding source or will it be necessary to consider how the access will be expanded for other students?
4. Do we need a computer lab? How much will it cost to staff and maintain it? If we have start-up monies, will we be able to find other funding to continue? How will we keep a lab staffed?
5. How will staff be trained to use it initially, and what are the ongoing staff development needs?

Staff development is essential for programs that wish to promote the use of technology. Effective staff development must be in the form of "hands on" manipulation of the technology as well as an understanding of how it can be used to enhance and enrich the learning experience.

Technologies are constantly changing and staff members are continually discovering new ways to use them. They need time to experiment and communicate with each other, and time to reflect on technologies' most effective uses.

The REEP Program Perspective

The Benefits & Challenges Of Technology

Inaam Mansoor, Director
Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP)

At the REEP Program, we have found that using technology has had many benefits and has also posed many challenges for our program and our learners. These benefits and challenges have been different at each stage of our development in the use of technology. When we first began planning our technology initiative, one of the greatest challenges to our effort was the lack of information available at the time to inform our fact finding and guide our decision making. We needed to know about the benefits and challenges technology posed for adult ESL programs and learners. Staff began to search out information and colleagues that could help us make informed decisions, but found that we had to rely on information from the fields of K-12 education and foreign language instruction to help us determine the relevance of benefits to our own programs.

While our initial search for information was long and hard, the commitment to use technology was strong and we set out to determine which technologies made the most sense for us and what funding sources could be called upon. We then developed a plan for not only using technology, but also growing with it and extending it to all of our program operations. This was no easy task due to the lack of centralized information, the incompatibility of computer formats, a fear of failure and anxiety over reallocating precious program funds. Yet, despite these obstacles, staff developed connections with other pioneers in the field, including software and hardware producers and depended on their own creativity and initiative to create our multimedia learning center.

Although one of our greatest challenges was the lack of information to make informed decisions, one of the greatest benefits we've derived as a program was in our own learning. The program has learned that our constituency will have to face the same challenges and frustration that we face in our daily lives as we encounter new technology in our homes, government, public agencies, and workplaces. We have found that we, as professionals, also need to develop a new 'technology literacy' if we are to assist our learners in the new information age. This recognition has had a profound effect on how we plan our programs, develop our staff, assess our learners and allocate our resources.

For ESL learners, technology not only motivates learning, it builds self-esteem, can provide immediate feedback, can provide learning beyond drill and practice and it can address various learning styles as well as help build learner strategies. Specifically, our teachers report that technology can be used to promote languages skills because learners are given opportunities to gather and organize data, use the information to solve problems, and make oral or written presentations. Technology use also makes writing, revising, and editing easier, and it provides the learners with the opportunity to become familiar with technology that they will encounter in their daily lives.

Even though this is a long litany of benefits, we would also caution that where technology may be a benefit for one kind of learner, it is a challenge for another. For example, while one benefit of technology for adult learners is privacy through one-on-one, self-paced computer assisted instruction, is that really what all language learners need? Perhaps it's appropriate for certain skill areas such as grammar or vocabulary development, but what about the use of technology to promote social interaction through pair work or group projects?

Statements about the benefits of technology can be misleading. Research is needed to inform us on which technologies and approaches are effective for various kinds of learners and under what kinds of situations. We need comprehensive and meaningful data on effectiveness to move us forward.

As professionals in the field, it is our responsibility to capitalize on the benefits of using technology. We should learn how to turn the challenges of using technology into opportunities that help us contribute to the knowledge base of our field.

Perspectives from the ALC

Integrating Technology & Language Learning

Lynda Terrill (Technology Coordinator)
Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP)

Since REEP's Adult Learning Center (ALC) opened in 1989, teachers, instructional assistants, volunteers, and adult ESL learners have worked together to discover, experiment with, and expand strategies for integrating technology into language learning. In these nine years, we've had a few constant expectations. First, all aspects of the ALC—floor plan, software and other materials, staffing, grouping strategies—need to work toward maintaining and enhancing the communicative essence of ESL classes. Second, a certain level of confusion brought on by the vagaries of computer software and hardware, fuzzy audio tapes, floods, and other catastrophes is to be expected, and doesn't appear to interfere with enthusiastic learning and teaching. Third, change itself is constant, affected by: a) learner needs and goals, b) curriculum emphases, c) software and hardware, and, d) funding. Finally, each instructor, as well as each learner, has used the lab in different ways.

All of the articles in this publication based on REEP experience—student and teacher orientation to the Internet, a student survey about using computers, a sample template and sample instructions for organizing information about software—illustrate ways REEP has integrated computer technology in adult ESL programs.

In the nine years since the Adult Learning Center opened, we've learned many lessons. Amid countless changes, our belief in the communicative essence of ESL instruction has remained constant. Through the years, REEP's numerous learners and teachers have used technology in many different ways toward many different goals. Each cycle we learn more about software, the Internet, and our learner's needs and goals. As we learn more, we continue to work toward integrating technology into the whole of our program and into the lives of our adult ESL learners.

Perspectives From Our Adult ESL Learners

Patricia Thurston (Teacher)
Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP)

In March, 1998, my high intermediate ESL class (400 level) conducted a survey about computers using questions they generated themselves. Including their own class, nine classes were polled. The classes ranged from literacy level beginners to advanced learners. Lower level students were interviewed in their native languages by members of the intermediate class who took notes and transcribed answers. Intermediate and advanced classes filled out the questionnaires in English. This type of survey was a natural adjunct to the class needs assessment and individual goal-setting that goes on in the REEP classes, since learner response helps chart the program's course.

The survey questions asked some basic yes/no questions, but also gave the learners a chance to answer some "how" and "why" questions as well:

- What is your class?
- Do you use a computer at home?
- Do you use a computer at work?
- Do you like to use computers at school? Why?
- Which programs do you like?
- Do you think the computer helps you? Why? How?
- How much time would you like to have in the computer lab?
- What do you want to learn more about in the computer lab?

The following statistics and comments clarified what the program had known anecdotally—learners like using computers and they think that computers are important tools for learning and for their own futures. Of the 137 respondents, 41 said they used computers at home and 15 used them at work. Only four learners said they did not like using the computers at school, two because they were not interested, one because that person was very tired, and one because it was "pretty boring."

The remaining respondents' answers to *why* they liked using the computers at school varied from "grammar" and "because I need to use the computer at work in the future" to "the computer helps me [be] independent of the teacher when I study by myself."

The question about which programs individuals liked offered a general list and the opportunity to check several categories:

- ❑ listening
- ❑ spelling
- ❑ reading
- ❑ vocabulary
- ❑ grammar
- ❑ pronunciation
- ❑ typing your writing
- ❑ other (what?)

Although preferences varied from class to class, *grammar* had the most responses overall. *Listening* and *pronunciation* were also popular in many classes.

Students in each class gave many different answers about "how" and "why" computers helped. A compilation from an intermediate class shows a representative range of answers:

> "I remember a lot of things." "I figure out a lot of opinions and related words." "It gave me a lot of information." "If I make mistakes, the computer corrects me." "I wrote all new words." "It keeps me learning." "I learn to type." "It helps on every topic." "Practice." "To work on grammar." "I can type a word and pick up vocabulary." "Push 'Help' if I don't understand." "When I get the right words, I will give you the right answer." "I can learn easier." "It teaches me the rules." "Because it is the science for tomorrow and everyday we can learn something different."

In "How much time would you like to have in the computer lab?" learners were requested to choose from either one, two, or three hours every week or, one, two, or three hours every two weeks. The learners chose once a week, except for the advanced level participants, who mentioned hours for both every week and every other week. By far the most popular scenario was three hours every week which—between using the Adult Learning Center (ALC) and the smaller Mini-Lab—is close to what is available for most classes.

Many of the answers students offered concerning what they wanted to learn more about in the computer lab have ramifications for directing the future of the ALC. Many learners wanted more of the same types of programs: grammar, spelling, vocabulary, listening, etc. However many students wanted to learn more about such things as "general knowledge about the computer" programming, *Windows, Excel, Microsoft Word* and *WordPerfect.* Several students want to have more access to and learn more about the Internet and e-mail. In the advanced class a student requested "general information about history, science" and another asked for "different types of writing: letter, essay, resume, etc."

For many reasons the 400 class learners have found the ALC useful. The information that they gathered will help inform the future of technology use in our program.

Using Computers with Adult ESL Learners

Lynda Terrill (Technology Coordinator)
Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP)

Introduction

Adult ESL learners and their teachers and tutors are increasingly gaining access to computers for learning. Thus, their need to integrate computers with other aspects of learning has intensified. In response to this need, more software is being geared toward adult learners—including adult ESL learners—than in the early 1990s. At each TESOL conference, more sessions and publishers' exhibits feature various technologies including software, video learning, and the Internet. In adult ESL programs within schools, community colleges and public libraries, welfare-to-work offices, and neighborhood centers, computers are becoming almost ubiquitous. Many practitioners and programs clamor for ever fancier software, a surefire methodology, a road map to the Internet, or maybe the magic bullet of language learning that software advertisements promise. However, computer assisted language learning is not a magic bullet.

What computers do offer immigrants and refugees is, at once, practical and philosophical. Computers offer language and lifelong learning in the electronic environment which surrounds us all, from getting one's driver's license to working in a fast food restaurant or hotel. When practitioners and programs encourage immigrants to learn in new ways, to find and share information on the Internet, and to learn to use the keyboard and the mouse, they have helped make entry into our technological society easier, quicker, and more exciting.

Making sense of new technology

How do programs begin to make sense of this new technology? Rarely do programs or practitioners have the resources or the luxury of planning ahead for developing technology use in the classroom or the lab. More often, teachers or programs are given donated computers or purchase equipment with a small amount of windfall money. As technology coordinator at the Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP), I am sometimes asked to give advice about beginning and maintaining a lab or using computers in the classroom. Although the venues are different—public library, church basement, community organization, or federally-funded lab—the questions are similar. The overarching question seems to be: How can computers assist learners in making progress in English and toward their own life goals?

Within this general question specific queries pop up: How do we start? What software is good? How can I effectively use old machines? My class is multilevel, what can I do in the lab? How can we maintain the hardware? Where can I find the time to learn how to use the computers myself? How do I integrate technology with the rest of the class? Are computers effective in helping adult ESL learners to acquire English? While there may be no easy answers to these questions, there are some clear directions to begin with. Look at the learners, assess their needs, look at your joint objectives, look at your technology, and then jump in.

Starting Out Small

Occasionally churches and community programs ask how they can use a couple of out-of-date donated computers. First, if teachers or administrators are computer novices, find the experts in your organization, or even among your ESL learners. Teens, college students, and young adults almost all have computer experience.

Next, find out the basic information. Do the clunkers have hard drives, i.e., electronic memories which can function even without software plugged in? What kind of diskettes do they require? Old *Apples*, which use the 5.25 inch floppy disks, really are almost obsolete unless they came with a supply of appropriate software. That is unlikely because, at least in retrospect, most of the 80s software was inappropriate. There are some useful software programs available on 3.5 inch diskettes for PCs (IBM computers and their clones). However, new software is almost exclusively on CD-ROMs, and most of the older machines are not capable of

running CD-ROMs.

So, can these old computers be useful? If the computers have word-processing programs or such programs can be installed on them, they can be very valuable. Literacy learners, beginners through advanced learners, and even ESL adults who may have learning disabilities can acquire technology skills at the same time they are learning to write in English. Our program has used several word-processing programs: *Bank Street Writer*, *Write*, *WordPerfect*, *Works*, and *Word*. The learning process is essentially the same in each. This excerpt from a REEP training module gives a brief rationale and methodology.

> *WordPerfect* can be used as a place to begin a writing task or as a place to do subsequent drafts. This really depends on you and your students. Some people like to begin their writing right at the computer but others first like to put the pen to paper. Pre-writing activities can be done in the classroom. It is a good idea to give students a brief introduction to *WordPerfect*. Show them key features on the keyboard, how to space, backspace, make capital letters, etc. They can practice by typing their name and address, or a short paragraph, before doing their own writing. During the writing stage, students prefer to work alone, but if you plan to do editing at the computer, this is a good time to have students work together. (*Integrating CALL into Adult ESL Instruction*, Huss-Lederman, S., et al, REEP/Arlington Public Schools, 1995)

It isn't necessary to know how to type to use a keyboard. In fact, using keyboards is a great reinforcement for basic literacy skills such as comparing lower and upper case letters, working on g/j and k/q, and practicing fine motor coordination. Word processing gives learners a chance to make mistakes and correct them, and to produce polished writing that looks good. Even at fairly low skill levels, groups can produce professional-looking books of recipes, home remedies, folk tales, or stories about home.

Of course, a compatible printer is necessary to complete such a project so each learner has a copy of the book to share with friends and family. Luckily, used printers are easy to find; individuals or businesses often donate their old printers.

When practitioners think about technology they must not lose sight of their program's underlying goals. Refugees, especially, and all immigrants have stories they want and need to tell. Whether this is through language experience stories dictated to a teacher who turns them into words on a computer screen, or through a full-blown process-writing activity, the final product is a powerful learning tool and a strong voice to the world. Listen to a voice from an intermediate adult ESL class from 1991. In this pre-laser printer, pre-mouse era, the story still cuts to the bone:

> The end of 1979 we decided to escape from Cambodia to America. We had a meeting in the family about how we would walk, and how we would act on the way to Thailand camp, because it was dangerous. The bad people put the bombs every where, and the guns fire if you were unlucky. (from *Short Stories About the B-4 Class*, Wilson School, Arlington Virginia, June 1991).

Now, our high intermediate adult ESL classes have an Internet web site which tells stories to the whole world, but its purpose and effect is the same as the earlier lower tech version.

> When I stood up, I felt sharp pain. But I walked with my dad down the road. About one or two blocks to say good bye to my father. I am so glad I did that because that was the last time I walked with my father shoulder to shoulder. I think with all the pain I had, I showed dad how much he meant to me. That was the last time I saw my father. When I came to the United States, my father passed away. I did not have a chance to see him again. And that changed my life. (Gada "The Most Important Person in My Life," from *Stories from Home: Writing by Intermediate Level ESL Students*, at http://www.wam.umd.edu/~sterrill/reep.html)

While technologies change, the learners' need to learn to write in English and to express themselves seem to remain constant. What also remains the same is the essential process of writing: learners ideas are shaped into words, edited, and revised with the encouragement of peers and teacher.

How should the lab be organized?

Even when programs are lucky enough to acquire

an up-to-date, networked lab, administrators and teachers ask, "How do we begin?" Recently the director of a Washington, D.C. program asked for advice when her program found itself in this enviable position. The director had the promise of several up-to-date, networked computers, volunteer teachers, and a volunteer technical advisor. Two of the director's questions were: "How do we organize the lab?" and "What software will be good for our students?"

I think the key to organizing the lab or the classroom is to remember your program's goal of facilitating learner communication. A lab needs to be set up to maximize communication among students not like an army of computers facing the front of the room. It's also important to provide a place for listening to audio cassettes, using old language master cards, or maybe, viewing a video. Having books and various word puzzles, grammar exercises, and conversation prompts seems to enhance the whole lab experience. Additionally, having at least one Internet station can provide impetus for some interactive learning.

Since most of the learners in the D.C. program are Central Americans with little formal education, the director wondered what software could be useful for them. First, I referred her to Susan Gaer's *ERIC Q & A*, "Using Software in the Adult ESL Classroom." (National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education, 1998.) The article addresses pertinent questions such as "What kinds of software is appropriate for adult ESL classrooms?" "How do I select software for the classroom?" and "How can I integrate the software into instruction?" This digest includes a bibliography of both pedagogical and software references.

Second, it's important to actually try out software programs before buying them, not only to ascertain whether your computers can run them successfully, but also to see if the software can meet learners' needs and goals. Most companies provide demos or loaner copies so teachers can scrutinize the software. Many software programs promise amazing results, but teachers need to critique the programs with their own students' needs and goals in mind. Adult learners can share their own opinions and offer advice as well. This is particularly important because many software companies still haven't managed to produce software that understands both the strengths and the challenges of adult literacy learners.

Third, providing a variety of software addresses the multilevel nature of classes and varying learner goals and interests. Even if the class or program has only a few computers and software programs, the teacher can encourage learners to choose what they wish to do. Furthermore, becoming familiar with several types of screen directions and program processes helps learners prepare for technology needs in other aspects of their lives. An eclectic collection can complement the students' own learning styles or moods. For instance, the learners in the D.C. program would often use the lab on weekends. For many of them, the only free time they might have from working one or two physically demanding jobs. Working on a specific grammar point with a partner, practicing with a game-style program such as Spell It Deluxe (Davidson & Associates, Torrance, CA, 1997), or writing a paragraph on the word processor could be relaxing, challenging, or social, depending on the learner's energy level, mood, and desire.

Hardware and Technical Assistance

While a few programs are lucky enough to have up-to-date hardware and a technical advisor, many programs have neither. Faulty hardware can cause frustration to both teachers and learners. If adult ESL programs are connected to public schools, churches and workplaces, there may be technical help available within the system. Perhaps someone in the program is knowledgeable about hardware. Maybe some work hours can be made available for one teacher to become the technology expert, take some troubleshooting classes, and gain hands-on experience. Someone in the community may come to the program to donate expertise and repair time.

Most programs for immigrants and refugees run on tight budgets, so a few simple procedures can save time, frustration, and money:

- Keep helpline, warranty information, and other documentation organized and handy.

- Install an up-to-date antivirus program to run continuously on the computer hard drives. Make it a rule to virus-check diskettes coming into the program and control access to software programs.
- If the computer or peripheral equipment is not working, check the connections.
- Keep the equipment clean, both externally and internally
- Before panicking, reboot the computer.

Using computers as part of a holistic learning experience

Integrating computer use with other learning activities may initially seem difficult because it is "one more thing" to juggle within the complex fabric of learning and teaching. Often teachers and tutors have a great deal to do, so it's difficult to find time to completely understand software, develop companion activities, scout out useful web sites, or figure out what buttons to push. Nonetheless, the positive results justify the initial struggle.

In March, 1998 students in REEP high intermediate class interviewed fellow students in 8 classes, from literacy to advanced levels. When asked, "Do you like to use the computers at school?" all but four students responded affirmatively. The answers to "Why?" ran the gamut from "helps me study" and "I understand more grammar," to "interesting to learn about the computer," and "because I need to use the computer at work in the future."

Planning for using computers in the classroom or lab is challenging and ever-changing. This is as it should be as teachers adapt to the expressed and unexpressed needs of adult ESL learners. The rules that guide other facets of teaching guide technology teaching as well. A teacher should plan ahead, ask colleagues for advice, have more activities and materials on hand than needed, expect to make mistakes, expect the learners to help, and kick back and enjoy the experience. Perhaps teachers and tutors need to adopt the adventuresome example of their students: jump in before you know everything and learn as you go.

Strategies

Whether a teacher has one computer in the classroom, or a networked lab, there are several strategies that help provide stress-free integration.

Orient students to the computer(s). A teacher can ask if there are student experts in the class. If there are, ask those students to introduce the other class members to the electronics, vocabulary, and process of using computers. If no one offers to teach, there are many resources and activities a teacher can use. One place for beginners to start is with *Reading, Writing, and Computing: A communication-based Approach for Teaching Pre-Computer Literacy to ESOL Adults in a Multilevel Setting* by Diana E. Della Costa. (Workforce Education, O-TEC, Mid-Florida Tech., Kissimmee, Florida). The *Oxford Picture Dictionary* clearly illustrates the computer and its components (Norma Shapiro and Jayme Adelson-Goldstein, Oxford University Press, 1998).

Asking learners to label parts of the computer and complete vocabulary word searches helps orient literacy and beginning learners. High beginning, intermediate, and advanced students can brainstorm questions, interview each other, and do research. If the students have access to the Internet, they can access information about computers on the World Wide Web. Learners can be given photocopies of a keyboard (the keyboard itself can be photocopied) and they can learn about the crucial keys: enter, space bar, escape, backspace, and delete even before they get to the computer. Playing solitaire gives learners a chance to get familiar with the mouse and to develop hand/eye coordination. In short, learners can do the same kinds of activities that they might do to become familiar with any topic.

Give careful instructions. It may be that teachers need careful instructions more than students do because it's the teachers who usually need to explain verbally and demonstrate how to access and use a software program. As teachers, assistants, volunteers, and students learn a software program, they should write down the information and share it. The following is an example of how to write instructions clearly:

ELLIS Pronunciation (Cali, Inc., 1995)
- on computer #16, choose "Ellis" from the pull-up programs menu
- type "1" for number of students
- type "y" but **Do Not Press Enter!** Wait.
- from the main menu, choose "Speech Acts" for help with pronunciation of entire phrases and sentences: choose "Master Tutor" for practice with particular sounds

Grouping Strategies. Successful integration of computers with other learning activities offers many opportunities for communication. One of the reasons REEP students like using the computer lab is because they can work independently on a personal goal such as, spelling, writing an essay, or reviewing a troublesome grammar point. However, in many cases, pair or small group configurations enhance production and interest on grammar points, listening, pronunciation, and editing. Learners working on group projects or preparing for class presentations can work together to find information in a CD-ROM encyclopedia or on the internet.

Conclusion: Coming back to the beginning

Computers and other kinds of technology are changing our world in some ways. Adult ESL learners need to be familiar with and comfortable with computers, so they can reach their own goals. The mission of REEP and all the other programs who assist refugees and other immigrants has been to help people to find better lives in the United States. Computers have not changed this; they are new tools that stand beside the ones we've used so well before. There are no more easy or more difficult answers to questions about computers than there are to other parts of our profession. All of us, learners, teachers, and administrators, come to the computer to share and learn and teach together. Some things have changed, but some things have remained the same.

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Shapiro, N. & Adelson-Goldstein, J. (1998). *The Oxford Picture Dictionary*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press.

Short Stories About the B-4 Class. (1991). Arlington, VA: Arlington Education and Employment Program.

Spell It Deluxe. [Computer Software]. (1997). Torrance, CA: Davidson & Associates.

Stories From Home: Writing by Intermediate Level ESL Students. (1998) at http://www.wam.umd.edu/~sterrill/reep.html

Types of Software

Susan Gaer
Santa Anna College, School of Continuing Education

(This excerpt is from Susan Gaer, "Using Software in the Adult ESL Classroom," previously published in *ERIC Q&A*, March, 1998).

In the last decade, the number of K-12 classrooms using computers and software has risen steadily. In these classrooms, computer use is so pervasive that, researcher Eric Plotnick (1996) wrote, "virtually every student in a formal education setting has access to a computer" (p.1).

The above statement cannot yet be made about adult education programs, especially programs for adults learning English as a second language (ESL) which are often underfunded and operate with limited resources (Florez, 1997). However, increasingly, adult ESL learners do have access to computers, whether it is in a language lab once or twice a week or in the classroom. For teachers of those learners the question now is not whether to use computers and software but how. This *Q&A* is an overview of types of ESL software with guidelines for the appropriate use of software in the adult ESL classroom.

What types of software are available?

There is a variety of ESL software now used in adult ESL instruction. Some of these are:

- Drill and practice programs such as the *Oxford Picture Dictionary CD-ROM* (1997).
- Tutorials such as *Typing Tutor 7.0* (1996).
- Simulations and games such as *Triple Play Plus* (1995).
- Problem solving programs such as *A Day in the Life* (Penn State University, 1995).
- Courseware (software that is developed as an entire course and has accompanying print materials and assessment tools) such as *ELLIS* (English Language Learning and Instruction System, 1997).
- Productivity tools such as word processing programs, databases, spreadsheets, graphics, and desktop publishing programs.
- There are also communications tools such as the Internet, the term used to describe the hundreds of thousands of computers that are connected by a network of wires and satellites all over the world, and video conferencing, using a video camera to connect, chat, and collaborate over the Internet.

References

Florez, M.C. (1997). The Adult ESL Teaching Profession. *ERIC Digest*. Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education.

Plotnick, E. (1996). Trends in Educational Technology. *ERIC Digest*. Syracuse, NY: ERIC Clearinghouse on Information and Technology. (EDRS No. ED 398861).

A representative list of software companies appears on page 24.

This brief excerpt gives you an overview of the material explored in depth in Susan Gaer's four-page article, which includes several software and encyclopedic references. Copies of the full article are available from the Spring Institute—see contact information on the inside front cover—or from The Center for Applied Linguistics, 1118 22nd Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, by phoning (202) 362-0700.

Organizing and Using Software

Susan Huss-Lederman, Sharon McKay
Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP)

(Susan, the former technology coordinator and now assistant professor of Applied Linguistics and TESL at the University of Wisconsin, Whitewater, provides tips on using word processing software and a game format for skills building, and Sharon, a teacher, shares a sample lesson plan on pages 14 and 15.)

At least initially, teachers may find learning about software programs challenging. You may have many software programs for many different instructional levels. Various programs emphasize different skills areas in widely varying formats. At REEP, some of our programs are up-to-the-minute and some are dinosaurs. While there is no substitute for sitting down at the computer and learning a program, we offer you some ideas for understanding types of software.

Word Processing Software for ESL

Word processing software is easily accessible, inexpensive and indispensable when it comes to using competencies with ESL students. You can use it to teach writing and writing conventions, you can clearly illustrate word order and grammar points, and you can help students build and strengthen their writing abilities through editing features. Word processing software also helps students build their voice by enabling them to express themselves in stories, essays and letters. Their work also builds adult dignity and self esteem as they see their work printed in clear, crisp print.

Lesson Planning/Integration Information. Word processing software can be used as a place to begin a writing task or as a place to do subsequent drafts. This really depends on you and your students. Some people like to begin their writing right at the computer, but others first like to put the pen to paper. Pre-writing activities can be done in the classroom. Give students a brief introduction to the software. Show them key features on the keyboard, how to space, backspace, make capital letters, etc. They can practice by typing their name and address, or a short paragraph before doing their own writing. During the writing stage, students prefer to work alone, but if you plan to do editing at the computer, this is a good time to have students work together.

Drill and Practice in a Game Setting—*Spell It 3*

This program is an example of software that can help students build basic skills in a fun and non-threatening way. *Spell It 3* contains 3,600 words, from literacy through advanced, often clustered according to delineated spelling rules. The program is user-friendly; the interface is lighthearted. The graphics are cute. A learner may attempt an activity many times and still achieve a perfect score. The authoring feature is easy; see the manual or go from menu bar to **editor**. With installed sound cards, pronunciation help will be available to students, plus a **Spelling Bee** feature. Certificates, lists and puzzles can be made and printed easily. Learners/teachers can keep records in the program. For "00" REEP levels, the authored lessons are appropriate. They have shorter lists (usually 10 words instead of 15–20), are more contextual, simple, and competency-based.

Lesson Planning/Integration Information. This is easy for learners and teachers, especially if the teacher has time to author a list and sentences for his/her own class. Students need not finish all activities. 20 or 30 minutes is probably enough time for a student to feel satisfied with self/lesson.

Technology as a Tool For Writing

Katherine Lucas,
Arlington Education and Employment Project

With all of my classes, after conducting extensive needs assessment, analyzing student writing samples, etc., I try to identify specific software to help students address areas of weakness, e.g. *Grammar Mastery* (American Language Association). I also try to find levels of vocabulary development software appropriate for the level of students, e.g., prefixes, suffixes, roots. For students with spelling difficulties, *Spell It* (Davidson and Associates) is very popular. I also identify reading passages on *Jostens Invest* (Jostens Learning Corporation) on the curriculum competency topic we are working on in class, for enrichment and extension, for students who want or need more work with reading. I use *Ellis—Senior Mastery* (CALI) academic topics for students whose goals include going to college in the U.S.

I also teach students to use *WordPerfect* and its spell-check (WordPerfect Corporation) to type some of their essays, and at least once every cycle, I sit at the computer with each student for an individual editing/revising conference on one of their essays. Students have told me they love and appreciate this on-on-one attention, and find that they feel stronger and more positive about their writing, editing, and revising skills after we do this. I am very positive and encouraging, praising them for their strengths and what is "right" about their drafts, before even beginning to address areas that we can work on together to make their draft even better and stronger. I then praise them for their good, hard work and positive progress when we are finished. We print out a copy of both their first draft, and our final jointly edited draft, for them to keep and compare. They love it.

Integrating Technology into Curriculum and Practice

REEP teachers integrate technology into both curriculum and practice. Below, Sharon McKay offers a lesson for beginners that combines the topic of consumerism with using and learning about computers.

LESSON PLAN FOR 150 (Adaptable at higher levels)
Topic: Consumerism
Objective: compare products (hardware and software); Express likes and dislikes.
Basic Skills: Numbers, Spelling
Life Skill: Comparative shopping; Asking for / giving directions
Language Skill(s): Speaking / Listening / Reading / Writing
Learners must be familiar with the following before using this plan: Basic hardware terminology and functions; previously practiced conversations comparing other products (clothing, food). This lesson should be done towards the end of the cycle since it presupposes higher language skills.

Stage of Lesson	Procedure	Resources	Notes
Warm UP	Whole Class: review terminology of computer hardware and software. Given labels, students label computer components. Students complete a worksheet reviewing the location of components.	Computer components label Teacher-made worksheet (fill-in-the-blank, definitions)	ID dialogues can be done directly in the lab: What's this? It's a _____ . Does this computer have a _____ ?
Introduction	**Small groups and/or Whole class:** Discussion of computer ownership, i.e., do they want one? Why or why not? Secretary makes a list of reasons for/against purchase.	Student-generated list of reasons for having computers	Small groups report back to whole and make a more general list.
Presentation	**1) Teacher/volunteer/ student experts demonstrate use of hardware:** e.g., screen, CPU, keyboard, mouse, modem, printer, CD ROM, LaserDiscs **2) Teacher/volunteer/ student experts demonstrate the use of: software:** a) Drill and Practice b) Applications c) Games d) Tutorials e) Databases f) Interactive VideoDiscs	List of hardware terms with pictures **Software:** *Spell It* *Typing Tutor* *Expressways CD-R* *IVD programs* *FITSB from Prodigy* *Work Perfect (any)* *Print Shop*	At lower levels, terminology can be adjusted, e.g., "**Study and Practice**" "**Teaching**" programs
Teacher Guided Practice 1	1. Students identify structures and language required to compare products and values.	**Software:** *Grammar Mastery* B5 **Texts:** *Side By Side 2*, pp. 36–41	Comparative and superlatives are prerequisite structures for higher levels. Lower-levels can work with comparatives only.

Stage of Lesson	Procedure	Resources	Notes
Teacher Guided Practice 1, *continued*	2. Instructor uses two computers in the lab to demonstrate basic differences in hardware (i.e. modem vs. no modem). 3. **Pairs**: Using teacher's model, students develop dialogue to ask/answer questions about two different computers.	*Grammarworks 2*, pp. 73, 75 *Expressways 1*, pp. 134–135 (preferences in food) *Expressways 2*, pp. 63, 68 (purchasing TV and car) Student-generated dialogue	
Teacher Guided Practice 2	1. Small Research Teams are created to examine hardware, practice using it, and evaluate parts on two different computers (three computers for higher levels). 2. Teams are assigned specific computers in the labs and use a checklist to compare hardware. 3. Teams write comparative sentences.	Teacher or student-made grid with questions for comparison	Groups may be formed randomly or based on the interests established in the Introductory activity.
Teacher Guided Practice 3	1. Teams examine three different kinds of software and compare them. 2. Teams use checklists for evaluation. 3. Teams write sentences or paragraphs to compare software.	1. Checklist/grid for software evaluation 2. Price List on software ***Software:*** *Spell It, Typing Tutor* *Expressways CD-ROM* *Maps and Facts* *IVD programs* *FITSB from Prodigy* *Work Perfect (any)* *Print Shop*	
Independent Practice / Evaluation	Teams present to other teams on one software program in a question/answer format similar to what would occur in a store. **Pairs** conduct comparative dialogues which indicate their preferences (likes, dislikes, would like).	**Software:** same as above *Expressways 1*, pp. 140–141 ("We can't afford it.") *Expressways 2*, pp. 89 ("I'd prefer.....")	Sample Language: Does it have a modem? Is it faster than that one? Do you have a smaller model? I like this one better. I'd prefer a laptop computer. I'd rather see a cheaper one.
Application	Pairs go to a local computer outlet and a local software store to do comparative shopping based on their checklists. Students ask questions about items. Students negotiate with each other concerning what they would purchase.	Local computer stores Student or Teacher-made grids	Lower level students can focus on one or two components. At higher levels, students can poll different stores and compare pricing and availability.

Computer Orientation for Beginning Level Students

Christine LeCloux,
Arlington Education and Employment Project (REEP)

For over two years I taught beginning level students at REEP. Approximately once a week, the class had access to one of our two computer labs, which had between 10 and 15 computers and a variety of software designed to provide practice in the areas of reading, listening, grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary and spelling. Through trial and error I learned how to help students view computers as the valuable learning tools they can be and to make the most of our time in the labs. If your beginning students have the opportunity to use computer programs, there are several things you should be aware of when designing lesson plans to make lab days productive and enjoyable for all.

Get a sense of what students know and expect.

Elicit information from students both orally and in writing—information grids and brief questionnaires work well—about how they are presently using computers or used them in their countries, their expectations about using software to learn English and what computer-related vocabulary they already know. Students' comfort levels with computers will most likely vary greatly, so it will be helpful to quickly identify any computer "experts" in the class who can help you guide other students.

Help students become comfortable with the lab and technology.

Provide students with an opportunity to visit the lab and briefly practice the various programs. Particularly with a large class, it is helpful to have labeled each computer ahead of time with a sign stating the name of the program and the skills they can practice with it, e.g. "Language Builder: vocabulary and spelling." With the students gathered around, the instructor can walk through each program, explaining the steps as simply as possible. At this point, it is convenient to point out to the class how one can take notes most effectively. Using some of our programs, for example, it is important to copy a vocabulary word when it is first presented as it will "disappear" from the screen once the student begins to type it. After the students have had this brief overview, they can then work together in small groups, preferably a mix of novices and experienced computer users, for 20–30 minutes to test out the programs themselves. The teacher can circulate, making sure that students find the essential keys and/or click in the right places. After the practice time, the instructor can debrief with the students back in the classroom.

Help students merge their time and resources well.

Beginning with the first official "lab day," the teacher can take some other steps to have the time run as smoothly as possible. First, give the students a form on which to record their work each time they finish a program, modeling how to use it on the overhead projector if possible. Emphasize that you will collect this at the end of the lab session. Second, write all the programs the students will be able to choose from on the chalkboard, specifying vocabulary lists and grammar points being focused on that day, and go over the list with them before entering the lab. Next, explain to students, depending on the configuration of your lab and the time available, that they will need to share the computers and change programs every 30–45 minutes. Let them know that if they encounter any technical problems they should raise their hands immediately.

While each ESL program's computer lab is very different, from the types of computers to the software loaded on them, there are a few additional points to keep in mind when guiding low proficiency level learners, no matter where you teach. First, nearly all of the latest software requires the student to use the mouse, which can be cumbersome for novices. You may want to have them initially just practice getting more skilled at pointing and clicking using the "mouse tutorial" of a word processing program. Next, the Internet can be very difficult to use with students at this level if

your students have little or no experience using it.

In our program, we our fortunate to have instructional assistants and native speaker volunteers who can actually sit down and show students where to click on a particular site that we would like them to use. If you have no assistants, you might find it more effective to have a large group gather around a computer with the Internet and work together getting around a Web site.

Finally, be prepared to deal with students who may seem to be uninterested in computers or even unwilling to use them. At the beginning level in particular, there are some students who simply prefer classroom learning to more independent computer learning. As they gain confidence in their English and computer skills, and get to know their classmates, they will hopefully come to look forward to lab days.

Computer 101

Christine LeCloux, REEP

Work on basic hardware and keyboard terminology so that students will understand and carry out instructions on the screen and can ask a teacher or lab assistant for technical help when problems arise. I found the following activity (a colleague's idea) to be a useful one: with the students gathered around a computer, I went over 10 vocabulary words, e.g. ***monitor***, ***mouse***, ***keyboard*** and ***enter key***, on large index cards. I had a student point to each part when we saw it on the card. When all was clear, students were assigned to a small group and a computer and given a pack of Post-Its, each labeled with one of the vocabulary words. Students then had to work together to label the parts of their computer as quickly as possible. After each group's work was checked, I gave them either a crossword puzzle or word search with the same vocabulary to complete for further practice.

For further information

...on using technology in the classroom:

Adult Literacy and New Technologies: Tools for a Lifetime, published by the US Congress, Office of Assessment, Washington, D.C., US Government Printing Office, July, 1993.

Healy, Deborah, and Johnson, Norman, Editors (1997) *TESOL CALL Interest Section Software List 1997*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. 276 pp.

Sperling, Dave (1997) *The Internet Guide*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents. 150 pp.

Stone, Antonia (1991) *Keystrokes to Literacy*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company. 195 pp.

Taylor, Macey B., and Perez, Laura M. (1989) *Something To Do On Monday....* La Jolla, CA: Athelstan Publications. 105 pp.

"Technology and Adult Learning: Current Perspectives," *ERIC Digest*, No. 197

Warschauer, Mark (1995) *E-Mail for English Teaching*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. 120 pp.

Additional references and web sites are listed on pages 22 to 24.

Website Orientation

Sharon McKay,
Arlington Education and Employment Project

"If you want to create webmaster spiders, it's best to let the spiders teach each other to crawl!"

Website Orientation • For Students New to the Web

Student Name(s):

Given By: [Volunteer]

A. Preview—Student Questions. What questions do the students have about the Web?

B. Explain that this will be a brief overview that will just begin to introduce the Web. They will learn some new vocabulary and some ways to use the Web.

1. Go through **your browser** to enter the Web.
2. Explain the term **World Wide Web**—a web of information.
3. Explain the term **website**.
4. Explain the term.
5. Explain the **Command Line** at the top.
6. Briefly identify the functions of each **command**.
7. Point out the **live links** (Underlined and different color).
8. Point out the changes in the **cursor** (pointer or hand).
9. Point out **search engines**. Enter a search engine to search for something. Have student give ideas of other key words which could be used for the search.
10. Explain the **status line** at the bottom—indicates when a document is "done" and ready to be viewed.
11. Go to a site where you can browse—explain **browse**.
12. Show the function of **Forward** and **Back**.
13. Explain **"surfing the net."**
14. Explain **Print**.
15. Explain that the Web **disconnects** if it isn't used for a few minutes.
16. Encourage students who are not "mousing" well to play games with the mouse (like Solitaire).
17. **If you have any net problems, check with the teacher or instructional assistant.** Please make a note of anything else which would be included in these instructions.
18. **Teach** 1 or 2 students, then have these students teach others.

I wrote this "Website Orientation" for use by volunteers working with intermediate adult ESL student using the Internet for the first time. Volunteers were needed because my students had:

- varying facility "web crawling" with volunteers;
- a wide range of assumptions concerning student prowess on the web; and,
- limited or varying access to my assistance.

This "Worksheet" is a sink or swim tactic which inundates the students with many new concepts. Volunteers may either want to break this into segments or repeat it as necessary throughout the course.

The critical aspects of this practice are:

- students getting hands-on "web crawling" experience
- students teaching other students to use the Internet.

Student Worksheet for the Web

Name: **Date:**

A. Vocabulary. Write about or draw a picture of the following words as they are explained to you:

1. World Wide Web
2. website
3. homepage
4. command line
5. cursor
6. live links
7. status line
8. forward/back
9. search engine
10. browse
11. "surf the net"
12. other

B. How to do it. Explain what you just learned to a new student and let that student do a search. Tell the student to ask you for help. Get help from the volunteer or teacher when you don't understand.

C. Questions. What do you still have questions about? What would you like to do on the Internet in the future?

The Internet: What is it and how should you use it?

Inaam Mansoor, Director
Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP)

Twenty-five years ago there were no computers. Today, according to some estimates, almost 30% of U.S. households own a PC, and more than 60% of U.S. students use computers in schools. There is little doubt that computers will be as prevalent in homes as TVs and VCRs. In fact, computers are transforming our TVs and our video technology. Our TVs may become computers enabling us to interact with people and information around the world. Our computers may become TVs, receiving TV and video signals from around the world.

However, computers are only the instruments through which we all gain access to information and communication. A far more powerful tool is the Internet. In this article, I will address some basic questions about the Internet—the information superhighway or web as it is being called. I will address what the web is, what it can do for us and our students or clients. I will also share web sites that might be of use to you and invite you to explore the net.

What is the information superhighway that everyone is getting connected to?

Some people might have you imagine an incredible global network with millions of computers connected to each other and exchanging a vast amount of information, electronic mail, news, pictures, resources, and most importantly, ideas.

Why should you and your students use the Internet?

The Internet provides everyone with the power of information, access, and voice. Dave Sperling, in his *Internet Guide*, invites us to imagine:

- an infinite number of resources available to help your students improve their listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities, and their grammar, vocabulary, idioms, slang, TOEFL or conversation skills;
- students sharing their essays, poems, recipes, biographies and even artwork worldwide;
- students communicating by text, voice or video with EFL classes around the world;
- having access to information and being heard anywhere in the world.

Now imagine what would happen if you and your students were denied access to the Internet. How would they be able to compete for jobs in the future? What experience would they have with computers? How would they access goods and services?

What can students do on the Internet?

- share their work
- access information
- conduct business
- find their voice
- plan and use resources

What can teachers and professionals do on the Internet?

- access relevant information
- brainstorm and network opportunities with others
- access professional journals, software and job information
- locate and gather information for a class and/or with a class
- integrate technology into curriculum in authentic, real-life ways
- advocate for the field and for learners

What are common Internet uses?

You can find information on the Web using Internet tools.

- **Search Engines** help you search web sites and organize them into categories, e.g., *AltaVista*, *Excite*.
- **Directories** are like search engines, but are created by humans. They may include site reviews. Examples include *Yahoo*, *Excite Net Directory*, and *Infoseek Select Sites*.

- **On-line Libraries** organize full text newspapers, magazines and journals, e.g., *Internet Public Library.*
- **White page directories** help you locate people around the U.S., e.g., *Bigfoot* (http://bigfoot.com/) and *ERIC* (http://ericae2.educ.cua.edu/search.htm).

You can find software on the Web.

- **Celia** (archive of ESL software): http://www.latrobe.edu.au/www/education/celia/celia.html
- **Virtual CALL Library** (best collection of CALL in the world at: http://www.sussex.ac.uk/langc/CALL.html

You can communicate on the Web.

- e-mail
- mailing lists (topic-oriented discussions)
- USENET news (read and post messages on any topic)
- bulletin Boards (post comments)
- chat rooms (live discussions)
- MOOS (live virtual environments)

But that's enough telling you about it. Visit these sites to see which ones you may want to incorporate into your teaching. Don't forget the other sites listed on pages 22 through 24. Have a ball!

Using the Internet

Inaam Mansoor and Lynda Terrill
Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP)

As more and more teachers and tutors gain Internet access, they will begin to see a tremendous potential for using it with adult ESL learners. Teachers will need to decide how to use the Internet not only actively, efficiently, and profitably, but also congruently with their own teaching philosophy and methodology. The first step for these teachers, of course, will be to become thoroughly comfortable with the Internet by learning how to explore it and mine it for resources that will support learning. Their next step should be to become clear about their purpose for using the Internet with learners. Sometimes they will want to use the Internet and its resources to support instruction and sometimes to assist learners in constructing knowledge and using the Internet in authentic ways.

Supporting Instruction

There are so many ESL-related sites on the Internet now—especially for intermediate and advanced learners—that it is a challenge to keep up. The Internet also provides many free resources to teachers and students alike, including software for teaching specific skills in ESL such as grammar, spelling, or listening. It is also possible to download free software, and set up free e-mail accounts.

Constructing Knowledge and Authentic Uses

The wealth of authentic, life skills-related and civics materials beckons learners and teachers to "do something real" on the Internet. Adult ESL learners can follow their questions, find their sources, make comments, and learn from the Internet on an equal footing with all others—worldwide—who use this resource. Learners can do such things as access INS or other government sites for information, fill out job and school applications, search for information about personal health issues or airline fares, plan a trip, calculate mortgage costs, find out about services in their

community, get directions to specific locations, e-mail their congressmen, communicate with relatives overseas, and on and on. With so many computers in schools and libraries today, the Internet is probably more accessible to learners than other sectors of American society.

Questions to guide decision-making

Whatever the purpose for using the Internet with students may be, teachers may want to ask themselves some questions to guide their decision-making. Some of these questions deal with logistical issues in using the Internet and others with pedagogical ones, for example:

- How much time will the learners have at the Internet in the classroom?
- How familiar are learners with the Internet?
- Will there be volunteers, assistants, or peers available to demystify the Internet?
- How can the Internet serve the multilevel aspects of the class?
- What is the instructional focus of the lesson?
- Are the learners' goals more directed toward academic needs or life skills needs or both?
- What do the learners need to know and be able to do about a particular topic?
- Will using the Internet extend, expand or enhance a lesson in ways that other resources might not?
- Will using the Internet provide learners with more independence than other resources?
- Will it foster interaction with peers or others either on-line or in person?
- Will the learners gain a measure of power or control that they might not have had without using the Internet?
- Will the class use the Internet for communicative activities such as setting up e-mail buddies, peer-editing, or work on projects?

Although teachers don't need to have the complete answers to the questions before they begin, partial answers will help them focus, organize time, space, and methodology. Have fun!

Integrating the Internet and Adult ESL Learning:

The Weather Report Video Project

Daniel Norton (former REEP ALC Manager)
Arlington Education and Employment Project (REEP)

At the TESOL '97 conference in Orlando, Florida, Daniel Norton, REEP's former Technology Coordinator, described a project from The Internet and Lifeskills ESL curriculum, in which REEP learners and teachers integrated Internet use into their life skills ESL and citizenship learning.

Weather Report Video Project

Beginning level students planned and produced a world weather report video. Students learned weather terms, read maps, located and learned to read weather maps from several Internet weather pages and also learned to operate a video camera. Most of these low-level literacy students had never used a computer before. Students collaborated in small mixed-language groups, chose the roles they would play and selected the cities they would report on. This project could easily be modified for higher levels as well.

Two weather-related web sites

Webpoint Weather

- *http://www.webpoint.com/weather/washingtonpost/nat.htm*

This is a very comprehensive site with lots of links to weather databases, satellite weather maps, movies and temperature maps. This site also has an excellent weather term glossary and explanation of various weather conditions.

The Weather Channel

- http://*www.weather.com*

What's good on "The Net" for Adult ESL Learners?

Lynda Terrill (Technology Coordinator)
Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP)

The Internet is becoming increasingly available to adult ESL learners. Some of the same libraries that provide tutoring services for adult learners also provide free access to the Internet. Adult ESL programs which are affiliated with public school systems and community colleges are connecting with the Internet, and some programs are taking advantage of low-cost Internet deals from local commercial providers. Because the Internet provides a way to access information, express opinions, shop, and bank, it is important for adult immigrants and refugees.

The majority of teachers who use the REEP labs think that the Internet is decidedly more accessible and useful for learners at the intermediate and advanced levels, but that there is also some use for beginning levels. It is important to note that REEP learners don't generally "surf the net." Usually, teachers, instructional assistants, volunteers, and learners themselves find useful sites that are "bookmarked" for classes to use.

There is a bewildering amount of material on the Internet, so how can one find out what's good on the Internet for adult ESL learners? Dave Sperling's *The Internet Guide* (Sperling, Prentice Hall Regents, Second Edition, 1998) offers basic information, terminology and website addresses to hundreds of ESL related sites. *Literacy Leader Fellowship Program Reports: Teaching and Learning with Internet-based Resources* (Cowles, National Institute for Literacy, 1997) gives rationale, lesson plans, addresses and a framework for evaluating Internet sites. Just *typing NIFL, TESOL Online, Litlink*, or *Dave's ESL Café* at the "search line" will produce a wealth of sites to explore.

Still, probably the only way for teachers, tutors, or volunteers to begin to feel comfortable enough with the Internet to use it with learners is to spend time exploring on their own. An "Internet Tutorial" at (*http://www.msn.com/tutorial/default.html*) is a good place to begin. "Virtual" museums and field trips, local and national government sites, and culture, holiday, and map sites are likely spots. Please remember that a crucial reason to orient learners and to preview sites is that there is also a bewildering amount of material that could be offensive or confusing to individuals.

Web Sites To Visit

ESL Sites

CELIA Shareware Site
- http://www.lrs.ed.uiuc.edu/students/jbuell/CELIA/celdesc.htm

Center for Applied Linguistics
- http://www.cal.org/

Dave's ESL Café
- http://www.pacificnet.net/~sperling/eslcafe.html

ELT Web Site
- http://www.springinstitute.com/

International Newspapers
- http://www.webwombat.com.au/intercom/newsprs/index.htm

REEP Web Sites
- http://www.mason.gmu.edu/~tnguye2/reep.htm
- http://www.wam.umd.edu/~sterrill/reep/reep.html

TESOL
- http://www.tesol.edu/index.html
- http://www.darkwing.uoregon.edu/~call/

Adult Edsucation Teacher's Annotated Webliography
- http://www2.wgbh.org/mbcweis/ltc/alri/webliography.html

Mental Health-Related Sites

Collaborative Refugee and Immigrant Information
- http://www.du.edu/gsis/refugee_info//

Consultation and Technical Assistance for Refugee Mental Health
- http://www.mentalhealth.org/resource/refugmh.htm

Refugee Mental Health Update
- http://www.nmha.org/prevention/update.8/cmhs.html

Employment-Related Sites

Refugee Web
- http://www.nmha.org/prevention/update.8/cmhs.html

Resumania
- http://www.umn.edu/ohr/ecep/resume/faq1.htm

Refugee-Related Sites

Refugee Studies Center
- http://www.isp.acad.umn.edu/RSC/rsc.html

Refugee Web
- http://www.jvs-boston.org/

UNHCR
- http://www.unhcr.ch/

Sites on Welfare Reform and Effective Service Approaches

Reva Allen, Ph.D.., Sr. Researcher at the Institute for Social an Economic Development in Iowa City, Iowa and Director of ISED's Refugee Welfare and Immigration Reform Project shared this information.

The Refugee Welfare and Immigration Reform Project, at the Institute for Social and Economic Development in Iowa City, Iowa, has two goals of interest to ESL teachers and their students:

1) *to increase awareness and understanding of:*
- new federal welfare reform and immigration policies, as well as state- and county-level policy options;
- the impact of these policies on refugee families; and
- effective service strategies and programs that enable refugee families to respond positively to these new policies; and,

2) *to provide technical assistance to refugee service agencies and other organizations* that are implementing innovative ORR-funded projects responding to the repercussions of welfare reform.

In addition to activities related to policy analysis, analysis of service issues, technical assistance and information sharing, ISED develops materials that may be of interest to people working with refugees. These materials clearly and simply describe national welfare and immigration reform policies, welfare options adopted by the states and counties, and effective service approaches. Some of these materials are translated into languages other than English. Materials are disseminated widely to refugee service providers through fact sheets, reports, and a web site:

Institute for Social and Economic Development
- http://www.ised.org

Other policy, research and service organizations have information on immigration and refugees.

Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF)
- http://www.igc.apc.org/apiahf

Policy updates, news bulletins and features, and publications that include information on children's health care, SSI and welfare reform in regards to immigrants

American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA)
- http://aila.org

Information and statistics about immigration, information on how to obtain an immigration lawyer, the text of various immigration laws, and information on changes in federal government agency procedures regarding immigrants

International Center for Migration, Ethnicity and Citizenship
- http://www.newschool.edu/icmec

Information about Internet resources, publications and researchers involved in policy analysis bearing on international migration, refugees and the incorporation of newcomers in host countries

National Immigration Forum (NIF)
- http://www.immigrationforum.org

Information on race and ethnic relations, immigration, citizenship, NIF resources and a discussion forum. NIF supports reunification of families, rescue

and resettlement of refugees fleeing persecution, equal treatment of immigrants under the law, and cooperation between immigrants and other Americans.

National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR)

• http://www.nnirr.org/nnirr/index.html

Information on NNIRR, its member organizations and its work, which includes information sharing, public education, coordinating actions on important immigration and refugee issues

Soros Foundations Network Home Page

• http://www.soros.org/

Information on the autonomous foundations which make up the Soros network and their work creating and maintaining the infrastructure and institutions of an open society

Soros "Forced Migration Project" (FMP)

• http://www.soros.org/fmp2/index.html

Links to sites on human rights, information about refugee and immigrant organizations, a search engine for information on forced migration, and special reports.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

• http://www.unicc.org/unhcrcdr

Background on the work of the UNHCR, definitions of terms relevant to refugee resettlement, background information on refugee situations categorized by country, and statistical information. The site includes the UNHCR Centre for Documentation and Research's "REFWORLD" databases.

REFWORLD Database

• http://www.unhcr.ch/refworld/welcome.htm

Hundreds of legal and policy-related documents and country reports

SOFTWARE CONTACT INFO

Athelstan

• publisher/distributer of teacher resources, authoring software, and instructional materials
Phone: 800-598-3880
E-mail: athel@nol.net
Web: http://www.not.net./~athel/athel.html

DynEd International

• multimedia software for Windows, Mac, OS/2, etcetera
Phone: 800-765-4375
Web: http://www.dyned.com

Encomium Publications

• TOEFL prep for DOS or MAC; downloadable demos
Phone: 800-243-4831
E-mail: encomium@iac.net
Web: http://www.iac.net/~encomium

Exceller Software

• linguistic reference and instructional software for IBM (Windows) and Macintosh (English, Spanish, French, German, Italian, Russian)
Phone: 607-257-5634 (Ithaca, NY)
E-mail: exceller@aol.com
Web: http://www.exceller.com

Fairfield Language Technologies

• Listening / speaking / structure for Mac or Windows; downloadable demos
Phone: 800-788-0822
E-mail: trs-info@trstone.com
Web: http://www.trstone.com

Gessler Educational Software

• French, Spanish, German, ESL
Phone: 800-456-5825
E-mail: gesslerco@aol.com

SpeakWare (formerly Vesela)

• ESL software for the Macintosh, with occasional tips and free things
Phone: 510-222-2455 (Richmond, CA)

Wida Software

• A UK publisher; PC demos are available at the web site
Phone: 0181-567-6941 (London)
E-mail: widasoft@lang.wida.co.uk
Web: http://www.wida.co.uk/wida/